

Somnolent Wanderer

Simargl, the Peaceful One (269.1)

The waves take you from your little skiff. Hungry, grasping, they pull you down, choking you. You struggle, but the cold tears the strength from you, and you go down. Down into darkness.

It is night time. You are on a beach. Gritty silver sand beneath your face. Half in, half out of the water. You cough, lungs searing, belly cramping as you vomit salt. You stand, unsteady. The wind is warm on your face. There is music on the wind. A lone voice, singing. You stumble, crunching over the sand, toward it.

There is a cave. No dark, but lit by dancing lights. Thumb-sized insects, with flickering blue and green lights in their abdomens. They crawl on the walls, or float dreamily in air around you, lazily zipping away when you try to reach out for one. The music continues. Liquid, silver notes gently caressing your ears, like a hand lingering on your cheek, like a soft touch on your forehead when you were in the grip of a fever, like a quick squeeze of your shoulder when you were afraid.

Under the music, the sound of a shuttle. Clack-clack-clack. Underpinning the music, accentuating rather than distracting. A loom, of iridescent olive and azure threads.

Seated at the loom, a changeling. White feathered brow, sweeping back across their scalp. Knife-pointed ears. Bright amethyst eyes. They are singing, and for a moment you know there would be nothing better in the world than to stand and listen to those mercurial tones. But the singing stops. The weaver looks at you, smiles.

For a moment you feel truly seen for the first time in your life. Their gaze penetrates your body and soul, cutting away all the deceptions and seeing through to your core. In that one glance they understand you entirely, and they accept it. All your flaws, weaknesses, shameful secrets. They sweep through your darkest corners and they do not judge.

They offer you sanctuary. A seat in the cave amid the flickering fireflies. With a long fingered hand they offer you a dark blue fruit. The rind is bitter, but the flesh is so sweet and the juice... is indescribable. Your thirst is quenched with a simple bowl of water purer than you have ever tasted. You feel welcomed. Safe.

As you eat and drink, your host asks you questions. About who you are, where you have come from, why you are here in the dark places of another world. What draws you here, what you are seeking. They draw you out, perhaps in spite of yourself. Their curiosity seems absolutely genuine and there is, again, no judgement.

The night flits by. They speak of their own life, as the ruler of an antique land. Of the cares and worries, the constant need to think of others, the constant dragging of their time and their life. Of losing themselves in the clamour of demands. The noise of other people, the stress of their regard. Of needing to leave. Of needing to set aside their crown, and find something better. Of being brave enough to be selfish, and to know that there is no weakness in admitting that sometimes you have to place the needs of others below your own needs.

You can feel your time growing short, and then they touch your hand and stare deep into your eyes.

“You can stay here,” they say gently. “You can stay, not as a prisoner, but as a guest. You can be safe, here in this sanctuary. We can walk on the white sands, and we can talk, and we can sing together. We can watch the seabirds wheel, we can laugh at the foolishness of the fireflies. You can

learn to use the loom, and I can teach you songs. Or we can just sit here together in silence, in the dark.”

Then their eyes become sad.

“Or you can leave, and keep looking for whatever you are looking for. But I warn you, you will never find it. It's essential nature is that it cannot be found. If you found it, it would not be itself, and you would be drawn on and...”

Their voice fades.

“Close your eyes,” they say, voice gentle. You obey. They begin to sing again, and a timeless moment later you awaken in your bed.

Game Information

You awaken feeling refreshed. You have had the best night's sleep you have ever known. From now until the next time you experience either the *Somnolent Wanderer* or *Sift the Dreamscape's Sands*, any time you sleep you will return to the island and the singer, and awaken refreshed. In your dream you may spend several hours or even days there. Curses that rely on giving you nightmares will still have their mechanical effect, but they cannot stop you reaching the island and awakening refreshed – you should reinterpret any negative roleplaying effects in a way that makes sense.

You have a profound awareness that if you are ever the target of the *Somnolent Wanderer*, *Sift the Dreamscapes Sands*, or any similar ritual that employs the *Dreamscape*, you will never find this place, this dreamer, ever again. No ritual magic will ever bring you back to this place once you leave it.

You experience a roleplaying effect that lasts until you next experience once of the described rituals: *you have had a good nights sleep and awoken refreshed.*